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Assembly California Legislature



SHIRLEY HORTON
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, SEVENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT

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January 4, 2006

Mr. Vic Weisser
Chair, California Inspection and Maintenance Review Committee
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Quantification of Air Quality Benefits Associated with Direction of Vehicles

Dear Chairman Weisser:

As a member of the California Legislature, I write to request the assistance and help from the California Inspection and Review Committee in understanding California's commitment to the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the subsequent quantification in the reduction in emissions and improvement in air quality attributed to a particular component of the Smog Check program.

Specifically, under Health and Safety Code 44010.5, the state is obligated to increase the capacity of the "Test-Only" program so that the capacity exists to commence, by January 1, 1996, the testing at test-only facilities of that portion of the state vehicle fleet that is subject to inspection and is registered in the enhanced program area, which is sufficient to meet the emission reduction performance standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency in regulations adopted pursuant to the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

I understand from the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) that pursuant to this statute, 36% or 3,444,000 of the cars requiring initial inspections in the Smog Check program were directed to "Test-Only" stations in 2005. I also understand from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) that the state committed to only sending 2 million vehicles per year to "Test-Only" under the State Implementation Plan (SIP) delivered to the United States Environmental Protection Agency in 2003. There is a large difference between the two numbers provided by BAR and CARB, respectively. And, as you are well aware, there is a high level of controversy associated with this topic.

Could you please advise my office on what emissions reductions credit we are receiving by the direction of vehicles to "Test-Only" stations? Also, what is the actual number of vehicles California has committed to send to "Test-Only" stations necessary for compliance within our most current SIP? Furthermore, within the context of the statute and/or the SIP, is California legally committed to sending vehicles to "Test-Only" stations from a targeted and/or specific vehicle population such as a "high emitter" category? If, California is indeed obligated to specifically send the population of "high emitter" vehicles to "Test-Only" stations in order to comply with the statute or commitments made in the SIP, what portion of the 3,444,000 being

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directed to "Test-Only" by BAR in 2005 can be categorized as "high emitters?" And finally, is it possible for California to receive the same amount of emissions credit for this portion of the program under the SIP by only sending vehicles which are "high emitters" to the "Test-Only"

network? If not, what is the incremental benefit, in terms of emissions reductions that are being achieved, by sending non high-emitter vehicles to "Test-Only" stations versus "Gold Shield" stations?

I appreciate any help your advisory committee and staff can provide in answering my questions. I would like to receive a response as soon as practical for your staff in order for my office to analyze and prepare for proposed legislation in the upcoming 2006 legislative session.

If you should need additional information or clarification of my query, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Legislative Director Stephanie Kimball at (916) 319-2078. Thank you.

Sincerely,



SHIRLEY HORTON

Assemblywoman, 78th District